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DESCRIPTION OF HALL NICHE AND
LIBRARY MANTEL.

(SEE OPPOSITE PAGE.)

BY BOTTICHER AND BALDWIN.

THE woodwork of the hall niche is of oak. The eave and settee cushions are of light-colored embossed leather. The cushions being secured in position by *bona fide* straps which form an element of the design. Light is admitted from both sides of the niche through stained glass openings. The wardrobe hooks and the scrolls of the umbrella stands are of wrought brass unpolished.

The mantel is executed in butternut. The fireplace facings and hearth border are of Formosa marble polished, with the exception of the carved and molded portions. The hearth is of tiles of a golden tone.

NOTES INDOORS AND OUT.

THE paragraphist announces, and what paragraphist was ever known to announce aught but the truth, that "the highest-priced parlor clock in America is owned by a Wall street man. It was made in New York and cost \$34,000." It takes a Wall street man or a newspaper paragraphist to be guilty of such extravagance. We laughed at Du Maurier's idea of the esthetic young couple living up to their old blue china tea set. But there is something bewilderingly hilarious in the conception of even a Wall street man, or a professional wit, living up to a \$34,000 clock. In such a case as that, clock's time means money indeed.

APROPOS of clocks, however, the time we live in has produced some exquisite as well as extravagant devices for measuring time with. It is a long stride from the sun dial, which was the first watchman of the fleeting hours, to the Wall street man's magnificent investment, real or apocryphal. At a day when you can buy an excellent time-piece for \$1, you can also easily invest a thousand times as much for one which will do no better work though it may do it longer and be more pleasing to the eye and ear while at work. A clock is an essential in the modern household. Its dial is a monitor we cannot do without, even if we can dispense with the monitions of a conscience, and the throbbing of its cunningly contrived heart is company we have grown so accustomed to that we are positively lonely without it. So we may be pardoned for measuring the hours as they slip by according to our means, though when we are reminded of such extravagances as our paragraphic friend adverts to, we can surely be forgiven a reflection upon a certain old proverb anent a fool and his money.

SOME years ago, when the new cult in household decoration came into general practice, you could go into out-of-the-way places, where the simple belongings as well as the simple customs of our grandfathers lingered, and readily trade a \$10 clock of the modern pattern for the finest heirloom that ever came out of Holland. The first people to reap the benefit of this were the artists, and a "grandfather's clock" is a familiar feature of every well-appointed studio. But our country cousins are proverbially acute in the perception of their own interests, and they soon discovered that the old time-pieces which were rusting in silence in out-of-the-way corners, under spider-haunted staircases, and in dust padded attics, were worth more than their value as firewood and old metal. To discover this was to set a price upon the discovery, but fashion demanded what taste had discovered and they got their price. The most melancholy wreck of a Dutch clock to be found now-a-days costs from \$80 to \$50, and any in good enough order to run twelve hours out of the

twenty-four command double as much. If that famous time-piece of Master Humphrey were in existence now, with its cricket voice speaking out of its "huge oaken case curiously and richly carved," it would be a prize, indeed, and one we could almost forgive even a Wall street man's making a financial fool of himself for.

THE spinning wheel was another beneficiary by the popular mania at the same period. At one time the wheel, with its distaff and twist of flax, was used even as a parlor ornament, but it has gone out of date now, and is only seen in studios and ultra esthetic households. A spinning wheel is picturesque enough in its place, but that place is certainly not the parlor.

To clocks that did not keep time, and spinning wheels that no one either used or wanted to use, fashion decreed that andirons, which there was no allowance for in the construction of the modern house, should be added. When andirons became fashionable, open fireplaces came in, and wood fires were in such demand that there were even barrooms of the more stylish order here which suffocated and froze their customers in deference to the revival. Such a tearing out of chimneys and building up of fireplaces had not been known in the history of the universe, and lo, the inconsistency of it all! When it was all done we discovered that we could not warm our houses with wood fires anyhow, and had to invent a basket to set upon our andirons and burn coal in, or light up into a mockery of fire with gas and colored glass. The result is that the open fireplace and the andirons which are beyond description delightfully picturesque when filled and loaded with blazing logs and smoldering ashes, have become the stiffest and most unfriendly apologies for a heating apparatus we possess, and their original and consistent beauty is lost in the too evident effort to make them beautiful.

THE fireplace was invented to burn wood in before any better method of heating was known. When coal was found to be the better fuel the grate was invented to utilize it. It is the vocation of invention, therefore, not to endeavor to make coal do the work of wood in the open fireplace, but to reconstruct the coal grate and make it picturesque. If you can keep up a wood fire, have a fireplace by all means, with andirons and fire irons and even a crane to hang your kettle on, if you are fond of a hot jorum when the night grows late and the wind sings in the chimney. But if you must use coal, reform your grate, set your copper kettle on a hole, and enjoy your fire as a consistent part of your house, not a compromise in which both the beauty of the wood and the comfort of the coal fire are lost.

THE wretched interior decoration of our churches, with so few exceptions that they only emphasize the rule, should command the attention of some decorative philanthropist. We have scarcely a church, handsome as many are externally, which is not internally a monstrosity of ignorant or tasteless finish. It is, of course, of no importance that we should worship the Architect and Decorator of the universe in a palace, but while we are about it we might at least honor him by applying to the beautification of his temple the lessons he holds out to us in the natural splendors of the created world.

A LOCAL builder landed upon a veritable treasure the other day. He made a contract to pull down an old farm house of the better order in Westchester and erect a pretentious modern villa on its site. The owner insisted that he should take the old material in the house in part payment. He did so willingly for a nominal price. From the house he obtained six superb mantels and fireplace settings, all in the best style of the carving of the day, two entire rooms paneled in the continental taste, a dozen fine doors, a staircase balustrade which is unique in its beauty, and five doorways each of which is a suggestion for a picture. The floors of the house are, with the exception of a few stray planks, perfectly sound, and there are two paneled ceilings which are alone worth all he paid for the house. He proposes to erect a house for himself out of this material, and one he would not trade for the pretentious structure he is to put up in the place of the one he got at such a bargain.

ONE of the most unpretentiously beautiful churches in America, externally, is the one presided over by Dr. Houghton, in Twenty-ninth street near Fifth avenue. It is from the "Little Church Around the Corner" that our actors are often buried, and not a few of them are married there. The church and rectory and Sunday school, standing in their patch of shaded green sward, with their irregularities of construction, their odds and ends of little doors and windows, their sturdy walls overrun with creepers, remind one, even amid the commonplace brick and mortar of modern New York, of the village church of the story tellers. The aspect of the "Little Church Around the Corner" is in midsummer delightfully rural, and in midwinter even an agreeable relief to an eye weary with the monotony of the great town.

WE are gradually returning to the primitive state in our house furnishings. Mary Stuart furniture is now coming in. In time we may expect to carpet our houses with rushes and eat out of wooden trenchers like Cedric the Saxon. Cedric, however, did it because he knew no better. We will do it without his extenuation.

THE TWO EXTREMES.

BY ALFRED TRUMBLE.

"THE other day," recently remarked a well-known and recognized master in decorative art, "I had occasion to call on Mr. X——. He is worth a cool couple of millions, and lives in a big, gloomy house near the park. On each wall of his parlor was an old Art Union engraving in a hideous frame, and on the mantel a magnificent Limoges vase. This latter gleamed like a gem in the barrenness and cold simplicity of the big and comfortable room. While I was looking at it Mr. X—— came in and I remarked:

"You have a fine bit of Limoges here?"
"Umph!" he answered. "It isn't my fault it is here. My wife won it at a church raffle and insists on keeping it on the mantel. If I left her to herself she'd have the house full of such trumpery and a fortune scattered around for people to trample on, and the dust to spoil, and the servants to break. But that's not my way. Money wasn't made to play the fool with, leastways when you make it as hard as I made mine."

"I didn't ask him what it was made for. A man who entertained such sentiments was capable of arguing that his gold had a value to him when he was in his grave. The same day I was in the house of another man, a Wall streeteer, who had made a fortune with Wall street rapidity. He had a house which was crammed from front door to attic with the most lavish and amazingly varied and incongruous magnificence.

"Great, isn't it, old fellow," said he, with childish exultation as I stared around me. "This place cost me a clean \$70,000. I told the decorator to go right ahead and spare no expense, and he didn't. What's the use of money if you can't get some enjoyment out of it while you are alive, eh?"

"Between these two extremes lies the happy medium of true decorative feeling. The man who buys his art by contract is a remove above the man who disdains all art. But each represents a class that cannot die out too soon for the good of our art and the people who practice it. If my Wall street friend could only have bought taste enough to furnish his house with half that \$70,000, he could have taken the other half and made a far better job of it than the contractor did. As it is he glories in the vulgar magnificence of his parvenu palace simply for the money it cost him, just as the other man plumes himself on the forbidding bareness of his domestic jail because it cost him nothing at all."

THE poet Campbell once proposed the health of Napoleon because he shot a bookseller. To judge from the way half the pictures at our exhibitions are framed, our artists could afford to toast the murderer of a frame maker on the same principle.

